1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

elders having great weight, and, as I shall subsequently point out, even the women are not excluded from a share in the politics of the tribe.

Though more or less dominated by the numerous conquerors who have successively, for three thousand years, overrun those regions which are now called Kûrdistan, the Kûrds have never ceased to own a distinct nationality. Since the Ottoman conquest they have been constantly wavering between the two rival powers of Islam—the Sunnis and the Shias, as represented by the Turks and the Persians respectively, siding, according to the exigencies of the time, now with one party and now with the other. Notwithstanding their sufferings in the destructive wars of conquest waged for centuries by Turk and Persian, and the constant internal feuds fomented by both those nations in order to weaken the power of the Kûrdish warriors, they still maintain a sort of semi-independence, preserving their nationality as distinct from that of their neighbours as in earlier days, though possessing no dynasty, political constitution, ancient religion, historical traditions, or literature, to bind them together.

Three times during the present century have national aspirations incited them to throw off the Turkish yoke; but owing to the immense extent of mountainous country over which they are scattered, their successes have been but partial and nugatory. Representatives as they probably are of the ancient Chaldeans, no other race has, perhaps, so long preserved its nationality under conditions so unfavourable.

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd M/11

539 that one can well do without gold and rich stuffs, but that without soldiers one cannot maintain one's power.

542 The Kûrdish women, of the nomad tribes more especially, take a lively interest in the social and political affairs of the tribe, are acquainted withall that concerns it—its feuds, plans, and conspiracies, in which they are indeed often moving spirits. As enterprising and indefatigable as the men of their race, they are ever on the alert, and ready to leap to the [992] saddle, where, though not elegant riders, they are quite at home, and able to keep up with their husbands in their adventurous wanderings.

This participation in the political life of the tribe is a peculiarity of nomad life, and of a primitive state of society. Mr. Millingen relates two instances which came under his personal notice of the intervention of women in public affairs. After a skirmish with the [721 Shikiah tribe, the beaten Kûrds retired to their en- 727] campment, with the loss of twenty-four of their warriors, and sent with all haste a deputation to the Pasha of Van imploring his mediation. A kind of commission being despatched on their behalf from this town, it was met at a distance of several miles from the Shikiah camp by a crowd of women, the pretty ones at the head wearing black veils, and shrieking as loudly and woefully as it was in their [728] power to do. Their lively grief, backed by a bribe of the Kûrdish delicacy called *djadjik*,[1] was successful in bringing about a solution favourable to the tribe, which, through the mediation of the women, was allowed to escape further punishment.

[1] The onion-flavoured cheese above-mentioned (p. 126).

district have made the trip, and are entitled to call themselves hajji or "pilgrim." Three men from the town went in 1950, and the wealthy merchants, such as Hajji Ibrahim and Hajji Muhammad Amin, who have completed the task have been mentioned. The return of pilgrims is an event of great importance in Rowanduz, and a crowd gathers to greet them at Kanlokan below the town. The pilgrims are escorted from the bus to their homes, accompanied by the music of drum, flute, and tambourine. Banquets are held for them, and each is expected to give a detailed account of his journey. They return with many souvenirs, such as rosaries, which are distributed to relatives and friends. A pilgrim commands a certain amount of public respect, and persons often stipulate sums in their wills for another to make the pilgrimage in their name. It is interesting that wealthy commoners can afford this undertaking, while many mullas or priests are rarely able to realize it. Chieftains or members of the government elite who are pilgrims are comparatively few in number. Hajji Muhammad 'Ali Agha of Jindian made the pilgrimage to avoid the police. Few of the aristocrats or officials in Rowanduz itself could claim the distinction. The duty of jihad or Holy War only enters into everyday life as a matter of conversation, usually with reference to Israel, and that of fasting will be discussed below.

Islam also includes a large body of social legislation, and that which is pertinent to this study has already been indicated. The use of alcoholic beverages,

3: Barth E-5 (1951) 1954 MA11 Kurd MA11

the Jaf confederacy of nomadic as well as sedentary tirsa. The following discussion will, for the sake of simplicity, relate only to the Hamawiands, an independent tira of population ca. 1000-1500, which became sedentary some two or three generations ago.

The lineage organization has two main areas of relevance: land ownership, and defence and offence in war. Property rights to land and grazing areas are held jointly by the tira as a whole; exclusive usufruct rights are vested in its localized segments, inhabiting compact villages with a population of 50 to 200 individuals. Within the village territory, men have traditional rights to certain fields. These rights are passed on from father to son, but are not inalienable, and land is freely redistributed by the village council when the need arises. If a segment becomes extinct, its territory passes as normal inheritance to the other segments of the lineage, according to the degrees of kinship (in any one level of segmentation, "brothers" exclude "cousins" from inheritance).

Further, until successful pacification in 1932, the lineage was, and still is potentially, also a military unit, mobilized in tens if a segment were attacked from without, and divided in opposition according to the segmentary charter when conflicts arose within the group. Conflicts relating to territorial rights were rife, both within, where they led to fission, and without, where they led to conquest or loss of territory.

There is a clear contrast between the Kurdish and most African systems in the readiness with which the problems of fusion and fission are solved. A man's rights to land are limited to the territory of the village segment of his lineage; a stranger or a person from another lineage segment is accepted into a village only as hired farm help ("aqawl") of degraded status. The territorial exclusiveness of lineage segments does tends to be maintained to high degree, and there are no kinship mechanisms for developing "stretched" lineages with local territorial and political rights.[7] The segmentary nature of the territorial lineage expresses itself directly in geographical distribution, and the respective territories of major and minor segments, inhabited nearly exclusively by them, down to the village level, can be plotted on a map or clearly seen where one has a view of the valley bottom. The main integrative factors relevant to segments larger than the village seem to be territorial contiguity, knowledge of common descent, and the importance of the tira as a defensive unit—this last probably being of most weight. No religious or ritual

[7] A permanent relationship may occasionally be established between a conquering lineage group and a conquered, non-tribal peasant population, who retain certain rights as serfs of the ruling lineage. In these cases, a caste barrier is set up, preventing intermarriage between the two groups. The relationship, observed on the southern margins of Hamawand territory, does not seem to be very stable.

701 usually called «riflemen», owned at least one horse and one rifle, and kept a constant large supply of ammunition. During their periods of insurgence, it was difficult for the Hamawands to obtain such supplies. An informal symbiosis was therefore established with merchants in Suleimani and Kirkuk, who, in return for furnishing the items that the Hamawands needed, were permitted to pass through the area with their other goods. The Hamawands used Turkish *Mauser* rifles, and made their bullets of soft lead. As late as 1880, swords and lances were still employed.

702 When a Hamawand boy reached the age of 7, military instruction began — «just like soldiers are trained». The father supervised the training, and according to legend, any boy who did not show sufficient fearlessness was chased out of the area. After the youth had killed his first man in battle, or otherwise showed himself worthy, he was given the full status of rifleman, and generally a present from the *Aghe* — a horse, a good rifle, or a quantity of stolen animals for sale.

• 721 The village *Aghas* were expected to mobilize the riflemen of the village at short notice for service in the larger units, led by the *Aghas* of the major branches of the Hamawand. But the village *Agha* was also free to initiate raids or conquest himself. A small group of *Aghas* from closely related villages might get together and contribute forces to the venture, or a single village might undertake the enterprise. Thus a warparty was formed, under the leadership of one *Agha* or one senior *Agha*. If the purpose were not looting of caravans, but conquest, some as-yet unconquered village was chosen as the object of attack, and the normal procedure would be for the group of riflemen to ride in a body to the village and offer the 727 inhabitants an ultimatum. If the village surrendered, one of the Hamawand party was settled in it to collect taxes. If the village chose to resist, it would be attacked, and if the Hamawand gained entry they would rob the village of all movable property, as well as domestic animals, and carry it all away. The defeated villagers, unable to continue their agricultural work without implements and animals, would then normally send a delegation to the victorious Hamawand village, promising submission for return of the property.

628 724 In fact, the basic principle underlying the institution, namely the collective responsibility of the members of the descent group, seems to be lacking. Where the descent group is in fact the local community, one is faced with the problem of deciding whether the group at any one time acts *qua* descent group or *qua* local, that is territorial, unit. To analyse the data relating to this, it is necessary to make a distinction between (1) such collective responsibility relating to homicide, where a whole group is held responsible for the initial act of *one* member, and (2) the collective nature of other types of *feud and warfare*, where the whole group as a political unit is involved in the *initial* action — such as would be the case where a death resulted from any kind of organized and premeditated raid that one group might make upon another, with a primary interest in booty. If, in this latter case — though it might lead to retaliation — the retaliation were not governed by considerations of equality, it could not properly be called blood feud.

Incidents of type (2) have certainly been frequent in Southern Kurdistan. Incidents of type (1), on the other hand, did not come to my knowledge, either in historical material or on the contemporary scene. It would rather seem that a pattern of individual and particular *revenge* prevails, which extends only to very near kinsmen and accomplices. Certainly, the only case history which I can document fairly completely (see Appendix II) is appropriately described in such terms. In this pattern of revenge, the harm and retribution is definitely directed towards the person who committed the initial murder, only secondarily towards his nearest kinsmen, and that only if they have taken a clear stand in the conflict. There can be no feeling of collective responsibility within the whole descent group, since random retaliation within the lineage or even village of the offender is never considered. Conversely, only the very close kin of the deceased are motivated by the desire for revenge. The orphan would experience great difficulties in calling on lineage mates to assist him by virtue of their righteous indignation — he would do much better if he emphasized an economic motive, constituting himself as the leader of a small group of «bandits» in an attempt to rob his opponent. Thus, both in the case of homicide between

tira and between sections of a single *tira*, the procedure seems to be one of personal revenge, and not retaliation within the whole group to which the offender belongs. It therefore seems useful to emphasize this difference by limiting the term blood feud to its typical form, as found e. g. among the Nuba, and to explore the possible reasons why the jural concepts of collective responsibility, on which the blood feud pattern is based, are *not* applied to a Kurdish lineage group or segment of such.

It is necessary to emphasize the unique situation, as compared to most societies described in the anthropological literature, in which these jural principles are to be applied. Kurdish lineages are not organized factions within a community, as is often the case in other societies; nor do they have the usual ramifying kinship connections with other groups. With a high frequency of close kin marriage, as described above, a Kurdish lineage, and even the lineage segments down to the village level, are endogamous, socially isolated units. They are, furthermore, geographically isolated. The *tira* as a whole occupies a large, contiguous territory; the members of the *tira* are essentially the sole residents of that territory. The local group, the village, is also the lineage segment. There is no indigenous political authority above the level of the maximal lineage; and such a maximal lineage has no vital relations with other groups (except a certain minimum of trade). The maximal lineage can therefore, in the autonomous Kurdish system, be regarded as «the society».

The concept of collective responsibility thus hardly applies in the usual sense in the relations between segments of *different* lineages —between groups in separate «societies». Jural principles of this type can only be applied *within* moderately homogeneous societies, where any individual as a sociological person is an approximate equivalent of his co-lineage mates. (Fortes 1953). With the geographical separation of Kurdish lineages, furthermore, feud between them would in fact necessitate aggression into «foreign» territory. The maximal lineage is a politically unified corporate group for purpose of defence, and thus conflicts on any scale between segments would lead directly to all-out war between the lineages to which they belonged. In such a situation, economic and other considerations favoring continued

765 in the village as a whole[1]). Any conspicuous excesses in celebration are however tempered by pious ideals of moderation.

574 551 621 576 To summarize: the *feast*, in its various religious and personal applications, offers a forum for competition and rivalry between persons, especially in the field of wealth, but this aspect is somewhat tempered by ideals of moderation and control inherent in the other scales by which individuals are evaluated. Furthermore, these communal or semi-communal occasions formalize the relative prestige positions of individuals, as seen by other individuals, and by the group as a whole. These prestige hierarchies find expression especially in situations where a regular order of serving or acting is observed. When all the tea comes out of the host's one samovar, individuals must necessarily be served in a sequence. In Kurdish culture, as in most other cultures, the *first* position in a sequence, and in fact precedence in general, is regarded as symbolic of status. These occasions thus necessarily come to express a status hierarchy, and that in a familiar context where the symbolism is clear and rivalry for relative places conscious. In seating, in serving, and in any sequence of appearance, this rule is followed. In the fluid type of hierarchy found in the Kurdish villages, where status positions are not crystallized in a formal structure, but are constantly being re-evaluated in terms, in the final instance, of the common denominator of *power*, it is essential that some mechanism is found whereby relative status and power can be compared and made public by non-violent means. Characteristically, practically all the major communal occasions in the villages of Southern Kurdistan involve several instances where this hierarchy can become expressed.

RAIDING AND WARFARE

• 721 701 The final and most spectacular occasion for the emergence of leadership and the expression of a status hierarchy is offered by the

[1]) This ritual slaughter of animals has a general significance as a sign of respect — when an important visitor arrives, the throat of a sheep is cut just before the visitor approaches, so that the blood may flow across the road just as he passes over.

7: Barth E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

situation of armed conflict. The conceptual separation of peace chief and war chief, frequently found in other societies, is lacking in the Kurdish area; thus the leader in war is also the leader in peace, and differences in total status organize the men of a local community in a single, universally relevant hierarchy of individuals. The pertinent questions in the present connection regarding armed conflict are then concerned with who initiates it, and what the extent and nature of his following is. 721 • 701

At present, of course, external administration prevents large scale conflicts of any kind, and this kind of leadership is rarely expressed, and then only in a limited field. In the autonomous Kurdish system, on the other hand, conflicts of all kinds were endemic, and the following discussion relates primarily to the patterns as freely expressed up till the nineteen twenties.

In the tribal political systems, political office directly involved leadership in war, and each *Agha* and *Ratz* in the hierarchy was responsible for mustering, and vested with the command of, a specified number of rifle-men. The same correspondence between civil and military command was characteristic of the feudal organizations of the non-tribal areas, and e. g. of the temporary organization established by Shaikh Mahmud.

The *Aghas* of villages could also independently initiate war parties — a development carried to the extreme in the case of the Hamawands. Such war or raiding parties also served as steppingstones for political advancement — the Hamawand who conquered a village would sooner or later break loose from the *Agha* that backed him, and constitute himself as an *Agha* on his own right. In the non-tribal areas, this was more easily done, and the successful warleader might carve out a small domain for himself. In the tribal system, the raiding parties directed towards the conquest of land were generally composed of near kin, who were, in fact, relieving local village population pressure and looking for a new place to settle down. The feudal lord, on the other hand, recruited his soldiers where he could, though there was a conscious attempt, as pointed out in the discussion of *Baban* organization to utilize tribal solidarity and use smaller groups of tribesmen to control larger groups of non-tribal peasants. Thus,

7: Barth E-S (1951), 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

leadership in war parties, and resultant conquest, was a major path of status mobility.

Raiding parties, not aimed at conquest, but merely at the looting of caravans or bazaars, tended to be more open in composition. Competent riflemen adventurers from various villages would congregate under the command of some «brigand leader» in the terminology of the external administration, and follow him as long as his luck lasted. Characteristically enough, the Hamawands form an exception to this usual pattern. Adapting their whole society to an economy based on war and looting, they also developed a singular form of professional ethics connected with these activities. Not only were even the incidental raiding parties apparently organized in the same pattern as village administration; rules of fair play were also developed. According to the accounts of their opponents as well as their own lore, women were never harmed or even searched in the raids on caravans — if you were able to slip your money-bag to a woman without the Hamawands noticing it, your money was safe — if the woman was honest! Moreover, if the hour for prayer found them in the middle of battle, they would each in turn get off their horse and go through the complete ritual, after which they would again charge into the turmoil!

The ordinary brigand, apart from this Hamawand development, qualified himself in the eyes of the villagers by a high rating on the scale of honor and bravery, as well as a fairly consistent run of good luck. In spite of persistent efforts on the part of the external administration, brigandage and raiding continues — though on a greatly reduced scale — and this must primarily be due to the positive value given to this type of bravery. The ideal which the brigand should approach is closely similar to our conception of Robin Hood. At the time of my visit, a certain bandit and murderer by the name Kulla Pira was active in the area. For all practical purposes he seemed to regard himself as involved in a blood feud with the police — and the stories circulating about him had a familiar Robin Hood ring. They involved stealing from the rich and giving to the poor, miraculous feats such as visiting the police inspector's home and forcing him to serve up a luxurious dinner, being gallant to the ladies, etc. etc.

627 692 and honest administrator. The venality of the junior police officers has probably an important effect upon the economic status, and hence the influence of the Aghas. The position was put to me thus by Hamid Amin Agha of Dergala. "In the old days" he said "all my followers gave me presents; nowadays few can afford to, they must keep in well with the police and then they have nothing left for me".

622 721 In earlier times the taifa Agha was probably in a position to organise small scale military activities; even today this would appear to be partly true. I was told for instance that in 1936 Ali Agha of Rayat, head of the Shevdini, had led his men across the border and sacked a Persian police post in reprisal for the latter having impounded some of his clansmens' cattle. Naturally such incidents are strongly disapproved of by the authorities.

The Tribal Agha

619 622 "In the case of the Balik, as we have seen, the Agha of the largest taifa, Mullasherifi, is also Agha paramount of the whole tribe, and this is doubtless the normal rule. His function as tribal Agha does not ever seem to have amounted to very much except in time of war, in which case he automatically became leader of the whole group and doubtless received economic benefits accordingly. In time of peace he only receives small token payments, such as gifts of fruit and the like, from his more remote subordinates.

[721] The evidence concerning the actual behaviour of the Balik during the disturbed times of 1914-1920 is contradictory. Sheikh Mohammad asserts that he led his people to a victorious massacre of the invading Russian army; Hamid Amin of Naupurdar on the other hand says that Sheikh Mohammad ran away and that it was he Hamid Amin who saved the remnants of the Balik from annihilation and finally routed the Russians. Whatever really happened, it seems clear that Sheikh Mohammad as head of the Mullasherifi ought to have led the Balik to war, whether he actually did so or not.

The first effect of contact with the external administration was certainly to increase the influence of the tribal Agha at the expense of his fellows. Thus Hay ingenuously remarks (p. 67) "The tribal chief has many obligations towards his tenants and tribesmen, the most important of which is that he will become their spokesman in all matters which concern the Government". The British

[731] "Hay (p. 68) states that it is the custom to present the paramount chief with a pregnant ewe from every considerable flock at the beginning of the year. Hay however makes no distinction between tribes and clans and the obligation may be towards the Agha of the taifa rather than the ashiret.

621 622 614 114 Such generalisations may lead to some startling sociological conclusions:-

> (p.221) This village (Merga; Map 2) lies just below Sheikh Mohammad Agha's residence (Walash) in the Balik country, and its inhabitants, some fifty families in number, are nearly all his relations. Being of 'chiefly' descent they consider it beneath their dignity to cultivate the soil; they have therefore only two means of livelihood, sponging on Sheikh Mohammad Agha who pays them most of his salary to keep them quiet, and looting and taking toll from the caravans that pass along the Persian Road.

This paragraph I consider most illuminating. For it is precisely on the basis of such evidence that the British policy of 'military pacification' is carried out on all the outlying frontiers of Empire. The tribesmen just beyond the border are always, it seems, "desperate bandits and brigands" intent on plundering the innocent peasantry within the jurisdiction of the British raj. Hay of course does not intentionally deceive. He had only seen Merga from afar and was merely recording the position as outlined to him by Sheikh Mohammad. In giving this account however Sheikh Mohammad was fairly obviously blackmailing the British Administrator for more money, and was probably himself responsible for the particular piece of brigandage complained of. Merga today has one of the most extensive cultivations of the whole district, and is considered a prosperous village. There seems no reason to suppose that the position was radically different in 1920, even though the ravages of war had temporarily disorganised the agricultural arrangements of the whole area.

• 721 181 This is not special pleading on behalf of the villagers of Merga or of the Kurds in general, but it is time that their nefarious activities were seen in proper proportion. It must be admitted that prior to the establishment of an external authority most Kurdish tribes freely resorted to brigandage on every possible occasion. It was a socially approved aspect of inter-tribal life and one upon which the Kurds themselves lay great emphasis in folk tale and tradition. But it is this very emphasis that has led to the fabulous distortions that appear in all accounts of Kurdish life either lay or official. To read the literature one must suppose that in former times the majority of Kurdish communities lived solely on the proceeds of plunder and ransom; and while the Government continues its present policy of cultural suppression such fallacies are obviously convenient. But the unbiased observer cannot avoid the conclusion that most of the more spectacular exploits of Kurdish brigandage are products of the Kurds' own imagination. Seen in their proper scale these warlike activities can never have been more than an exciting gloss upon the normal balanced cycle of agricultural economics.

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

CHAPTER 5

Warfare

Under present conditions large scale warlike activities on the part of the tribes are a complete impossibility, but that does not justify us in dismissing the topic of warfare altogether as being of no relevance to the present social situation. Historically speaking the traditional forms of Kurdish social organisation are associated with an ideology of raids and counter raids, war, pillage and feud. Earlier writers have undoubtedly greatly exaggerated the extent to which the average Kurd in former times did in fact devote himself to murder, violence and loot, but in describing this preoccupation they were, after all, only accepting the Kurd at his own valuation. The Kurdish ideal of manly behaviour does correspond very closely with the typical English concept of a "Brigand". His folk tales are gory in the extreme; his conversation hardly less so. And this has relevance to the existing situation. The Agha likes to think of himself as a military leader rather than as a landlord; he habitually classes all his neighbours into 'friends' and 'enemies'. The consequences of this attitude are highly subtle and cannot be examined here, but at least two divergent trends can be noted. On the one hand the sharp antagonism between neighbouring groups is even today a force of social cohesion; the members of the clan or the tribe are aware of their unity largely in terms of their common enmity to some other group. On the other hand increasing economic contacts and the constant harmonising efforts of the Police and the Administration, in so far as they are successful in lessening intergroup suspicion, do at the same time serve to lessen the social cohesion of the groups concerned.

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While organised raiding or warfare is now impossible the private feud continues and may be examined further.

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The Feud

The motif of the blood feud may be summarised by the phrase that "a man's wrongs must be avenged by his kinsfolk and his descendants", and we may note at once that a system of small patrilocal, nearly endogamous groups is peculiarly suited to perpetuate antagonisms of this kind. The individual's near kinfolk are also his near neighbours, and since his wife's kinsfolk are probably identical with his own he is bound by no ties of loyalty to any group outside his own village. Within the village all are bound together to resist the aggressor, beyond it everyone is a potential enemy, the identity of interest between the family and the village is complete.

Quarrels between villages may arise from a variety of causes, chiefly economic. Water and grazing rights are always ill-defined and may lead to serious friction in times of scarcity, and this may

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9: Roosevelt G-5 (1946-1947) 1947 MA11 Kurd MA11
Mahabad

668 Although in the course of these conversations in Tehran a truce
721 had been agreed upon by the Central Government on the one hand, and the Kurds and Azerbaijanis on the other, sniping and skirmishing continued, occasionally flaring up into open warfare. The Iranians, in view of the declared intention of the Soviets to evacuate Iran early in May,[7] now began to take more active military measures. The Kurdish front was held by the Iranian Fourth Division under the command of tall, able General Homayuni, recently transferred from Khuzistan, where he had carried out a vigorous disarmament program among the Arab tribes. In mid-April, Homayuni opened the roads and rushed reinforcements to Saqqiz, Baneh, and Sardasht.

The Soviets were said to have promised the Kurds planes, tanks, and heavy weapons, and to have taken some fifty young Kurds to Baku for military and political training. For the present, however, Qazi Mohammad had to rely on tribal levies to oppose the Iranians. In the hills overlooking General Homayuni's forces was a formidable but divided force consisting principally of the Barzanis, but also including small Kurdish tribes always ready for fighting and looting, and Hama Rashid and his henchmen.[8]

As General Homayuni pulled more and more reinforcements into the area, Qazi Mohammad and the Soviets put pressure on Amr Khan of the Shikak and his allies, the Herki, to come down from the north and aid in the operations. At first Amr Khan demurred on the excuse that his horses were in pasture elsewhere and could not be moved, but at the beginning of May he reluctantly sent his tribesmen to the battle zone.

The month of May 1946 was marked by a number of fierce battles, all fought by small numbers and none of them followed through by decisive operations. In the beginning of the month the Kurds won a victory damaging to Iranian prestige when they surprised an army column on a road march near Saqqiz, killed twenty, and captured thirty-odd prisoners, two machine guns, and 4,000 rounds of ammunition. The Kurdish prisoners were conscripted in the Kurdish army; the rest were sent to Tabriz.

[7] The Red Army finally evacuated Iran on May 9, 1946.

[8] Hama Rashid was of dubious value to the Kurds, as he was continually carrying on secret negotiations with the Iranian army for his reinstatement as Governor of Baneh, and was also suspected by both Kurds and Iranians of a mysterious connection with the British. In August, hearing that plans were being made in Mahabad to have him murdered, Hama Rashid fled back into Iraq.

9: Roosevelt G-5 (1946-1947) 1947 MA11 Kurd MA11
Mahabad

668 The Kurds were repulsed, however, in an attack on the Mah-
• 721 mudabad Pass near Saqqiz, designed to cut the Senandaj Road, and again later after they had seized the hills overlooking Saqqiz. The Iranian army drove them off and erected round watch-towers of mud on the summits, each manned by thirty or forty soldiers. Finally a truce was effected whereby liaison officers were exchanged,[1] each side was to stay within its lines, and the Kurds were to have the right to inspect vehicles going from Saqqiz to Baneh and Sardasht and so stop arms and ammunition from reaching the Iranian garrisons there. The Shikak and the Herki returned to the north.

CHARACTER OF QAZI MOHAMMAD AND THE KURDISH REPUBLIC

186 After this period of conflict, Qazi Mohammad drew aside his
609 iron curtain and gave non-Soviet observers a chance to look at his country. Although feeling against the British on account of the expulsion of the Barzanis from Iraq, Soviet-sponsored anti-British propaganda, and certain events in the past in which the Kurds considered they had been victims of British opportunism, was too strong to permit them to visit the tiny Kurdish Republic, at various times four Americans and one Frenchman were guests of Qazi Mohammad.

These observers found the Kurdish Republic to be a going con-
642 cern. Although destitute of any legal basis whatsoever, Qazi
621 Mohammad's *de facto* government continued as before, changing only the title of its ministers from *wazir* (minister) to *rais* (chief).
624 Qazi Mohammad himself became merely the leader of the party (Pishwa-i-Hizb-i-Dimokrat-i-Kurd). The villages were run by their old landlords and tribal leaders with the aid of a gendarmerie locally recruited and dressed in Kurdish costume, but commanded by officers from Mahabad with Soviet uniforms. Mahabad itself, from a typically drab Persian provincial town, had become picturesque and colorful, its streets thronging with Kurds in national costume, free for the moment of the hated Iranian soldiers and gendarmes.

[1] The Kurdish liaison officer was "Colonel" Mohammad Nanavzadeh, one of the original founders of the Komala, later killed when the Iranian army plane in which he was traveling crashed near Baneh.

leaders in Moslem armies, from Saladin (Salah ad Din) in the hosts that opposed the Crusaders, to the late Bekr Sidqi in the army of Iraq; but they have never drawn attention to their Kurdish origin, as the name 'Kurd' implies a shepherd, which in the East is considered a lowly occupation not worthy of great men.

Some have carved for themselves small kingdoms among the tribes of their own race. But that very martial spirit which makes the Kurd proud and independent, and forbids him to acknowledge the sovereignty of anyone outside his tribe for long, has prevented the Kurds from becoming united under any one chief and thus imprinting their name on the history of the world.

In the history of the new state of Iraq individual Kurds have already made their impression. The best-known is Shaikh

[p. 390 (B)]

721 Mahmud of Sulaimaniya, whose several rebellions against the British earned him the unofficial title of 'Director of Training of the R.A.F.' He gave the Royal Air Force practice in operations spread over twelve
726 years. The British method of limited air bombardment after due warning suits the ideas of the chivalrous Kurd in war: to the Kurd it is one of the things that are 'not done' to kill too many people. Shaikh Mahmud and his merry men would set off on the warpath and fight for a few months until they began to suffer discomforts, then give in until the restless highland spirit once more urged them on.
727 Sometimes people got killed, but that was one of the misfortunes of the game. During one rebellion, when a British aircraft was brought down near Penjwin, Shaikh Mahmud captured its two occupants and held them prisoner for a fort-

[p.390(e)]

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Kurdish music is nevertheless played on a pipe resembling the chanter of a bagpipe and has often a pleasant lilt. 534 535
Kurdish dancing, however, is by no means as strenuous as Scottish. Kurds and all other mountain dwellers in Kurdistan dance what is known as the chain-dance, similar to that which is, I believe, commonly seen in the Balkans. The dancers join hands and form a ring. The piper and a drummer with a sort of tenor drum stand in the middle, and the dance consists of fairly intricate footwork while the circle moves slowly round. Often star dancers who fancy themselves as budding Nijinskys do solo dances inside the circle. Amongst the [K 563] Kurds the men and women dance separately, but with the Christian sects the two sexes dance together. This does not mean, however, that Kurdish women are completely segregated or kept by themselves. As a matter of fact, they possess considerable freedom and may be seen gathering firewood, tending animals or engaged in other tasks on the mountainside, often far from their villages.

Up to five years ago the Barzan district of Kurdistan retained all K
of its savage and primitive features. Government had not penetrated 619
and Shaikh Ahmed, a religious fanatic, was dictator. With the help 643
of his brothers and a standing army of several hundred men he com- 641
pletely dominated the impoverished inhabitants, who had the shaikh's 726
bodyguard perpetually billeted on them and who had to provide them 792
with food, clothing and tobacco and anything else they might fancy.
Any protests on the part of the villagers were discouraged by the K
strongest methods. Such complete ascendancy did Shaikh Ahmed gain [212]
over his savage and illiterate people that they began to look upon him
as a god and, though Muslims in name, turned their faces towards him K
in prayer rather than towards Mecca, as tradition demands. There 792
was a Mullah in the district called Mullah Juj, who represented himself 779
to be the prophet of this new god. The Mullah was a very fiery and 682
eloquent speaker and, unfortunately for himself, his fame began to 784
surpass even that of the deity. This could not of course be tolerated, 661
and one of Shaikh Ahmed's brothers "bumped off" the presumptuous 671
prophet. Up to that time the Koran had been revered, but now the K
Shaikh issued orders for the destruction of all copies to be found. He [136]
also withdrew the ban on the eating of pork, for wild pig were plenti- I
ful in Barzan. Armed missionaries were sent out beyond the Barzan K.
bounds, and villages which refused to accept the Shaikh were burned 721
and a number of the male inhabitants put to death. This state of 657
affairs could not be allowed to continue, and the 'Iraq Government 648
was forced to take action in conjunction with the British Royal K
Air Force. 697

4 Wilson G-3 (no date) 1937 MH1 Iraq MH1
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Air Force. The terrain was exceedingly mountainous and thickly wooded and there were many caves in which to shelter from bombs or machine-gunning from the air. The Shaikh's followers, too, were very hardy and mobile. Without very efficient air action, which aimed at destroying the morale of the Kurds by perpetually harassing them rather than by slaying them, to gain a definite result would have been a very costly affair. As it was the Shaikh and his followers were eventually driven into Turkey and after surrendering to the Turkish authorities were handed over to the 'Iraq Government. It was found that the Shaikh, his brothers and the remnants of the standing army could not fit in with any regular administration, and so they have been settled in small bodies in southern Kurdistan near Sulimani, where they will not be in a position to cause further trouble. The Barzanis have now reverted to the Islamic faith.

Roads

What has really tamed the Kurds is the Government policy of making roads through the mountains, just as General Wade did in Scotland with similar results. Good roads now exist from Arbil, where Alexander the Great defeated King Darius III. in 331 B.C., to the Persian frontier at Rayat and from Dohuq to Amadia. Both these roads represent considerable engineering feats and carry a good volume of traffic. The Rowanduz road was that which a nomadic Kurdish tribe, the Herki, with their 60,000 animals, used on their annual migrations from 'Iraq to their summer grazing grounds in Iran. During recent years difficulties arose between the nomads and the 'Irani Government, and the former now remain in 'Iraq for the summer. It has not been easy to find grazing for them there, as other nomadic tribes had already been forbidden by the Turkish Government to graze in Turkey and had occupied practically all the spare grazing. The 'Iraq Government, too, has been attempting to popularize summer resorts in Kurdistan and so prevent the flow of money to Syria and the Lebanon, where good summer amenities exist. I am afraid, however, that so far this policy has not been very successful. Good summer resorts require the expenditure of much money, and the attempts at providing suitable summer accommodation have, I regret, tended to spoil what was originally beautiful scenery.

The little town of Zakho in western Kurdistan has greatly benefited by the improvement in public security and communications and is

42 Wilson G-3 (no date) 1937 MH1 Iraq MH1
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now a flourishing market for the surrounding country and for trade with Turkey. It has one feature of great interest: an ancient bridge of Roman design, known locally as "Alexander's bridge," though unlikely to be in any way connected with the great conqueror. Tradition at Zakho has, however, another tale of the construction of the bridge. It is said to have been built by a celebrated local governor, who found that the keystone would not remain in place. He summoned a soothsayer, who proclaimed that it would never stand until a life had been built into the arch. The governor accepted the verdict and with his councillors, who were sworn to secrecy, decided that the first living thing to follow them on to the bridge the next morning would provide the necessary victim. They waited for some hours, but no one came. Then the governor's little daughter wondered why her father was so long away and taking her pet dog she set off to look for him. Her father was at first terrified when he saw her coming, but was relieved when he noticed that her dog was running in front of her. Alas, she thought it unfitting for the dog to approach her father before she did and so she called it and stepped on to the bridge. Public opinion compelled the governor to carry out the sacrifice and the girl was built into the centre of the arch and the keystone held and has gone on holding for hundreds of years.

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The development of Kurdistan has naturally not been popular with all the Kurds, and I remember an interesting incident. During the construction of the Amadia road, an elderly Agha stood for a while sadly watching the blasting of a pulpit of overhanging rock. When echoes of the explosion had died and the last fragments of stone had fallen into the rocky gorge below, he turned sorrowfully away. "The old days, the old days," he lamented. "Many is the time I lay behind that rock with my rifle and held up caravans for safe-conduct money."

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The town of Amadia, which, like Edinburgh Castle, is situated on a rocky plateau at a height of 4,100 feet, sixteen feet higher than Cairn Gorm, is now easily accessible by road. The town was formerly ruled by semi-independent Pashas who admitted a nominal suzerainty to the Turkish authorities. It has a stormy history, and the minaret of the mosque is pitted with bullet holes. These are souvenirs of 1925, when the Barzan Kurds, in alliance with some of the descendants of the old rulers of Amadia, attacked the town and succeeded in surrounding the Mosuli qaimaqam and a handful of police in the Government serai. The stout-hearted garrison held out until they were rescued by a body of Assyrians under the Assyrian bishop, Mar Sergis, a jovial Friar Tuck of the Nestorian Church.

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